

**Virginia Cave Board  
Saturday, September 16, 2006  
Grand Caverns, Grottoes, Virginia**

**Virginia Cave Board Members Present**

Ms. Claire Ward, Chairman  
Ms Andrea Futrell, Vice Chairman  
Dr. John R. Holsinger  
Mr. Tom Lera  
Ms. Babs Melton  
Ms. Judy Molnar  
Ms. Barbara L. Moss  
Mr. Jesse Richardson  
Mr. David Socky

**Virginia Cave Board Members Not Present**

Dr. David C. Culver  
Mr. Drew Harrison  
Virginia Department of Historical Resources representative

**DCR Staff Present**

Mr. Joey Fagan  
Mr. Larry Smith  
Mr. Tom Smith  
Mr. Wil Orndorff  
Ms. Carol Zokaites

**Others Present**

Mr. Gary Moss, National Speleological Society

**Call to Order**

Ms. Claire Ward called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. and declared a quorum present.

**Introduction and Announcements**

Ms. Ward welcomed members, staff, and guests. She recognized new members of the Board, Ms. Babs Melton, Mr. Jesse Richardson, and Mr. David Socky.

### **Election of Officers**

Members of the Board nominated the following slate of officers:

Mr. Tom Lera, Chairman  
Ms. Andrea Futrell, Vice Chairman

The Board accepted the slate of officers unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes from April 29, 2006**

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved that the minutes of the April 29, 2006 meeting of the Virginia Cave Board be approved as corrected.

SECOND: Ms. Barbara Moss seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

### **Treasurers Report**

The treasurer's report will be submitted to the Board at a later time.

## **Old Business**

### **Education and Outreach Committee**

Ms. Moss reported that Mr. Richardson is continuing to organize and present the Growing Communities on Karst Conference series. Conferences have been held in Shepherdstown and Lewisburg, West Virginia. Growing Communities on Karst Conferences are planned for Northern Virginia and Frederick County during spring 2007. The conferences are designed to help local governments to apply alternative planning, design, and engineering techniques on karst and other sensitive lands so they can better achieve watershed-friendly, economically sustainable growth.

The next issue of the Virginia Cave Owner's Newsletter will follow a conservation easement theme. It is hoped that the newsletter will be ready for distribution between January and April 2007. A brief survey of cave owners will be distributed to solicit input on what type of articles they would like to see in the Virginia Cave Owner's Newsletter.

Ms. Carol Zokaites reported that 10,000 copies of a new Virginia Big-eared Bat pamphlet have been printed. A second order for 10,000 more copies is planned for when existing stocks are depleted.

Virginia Cave Week 2006 has the theme “Be a Citizen Scientist.” Cave Week is being observed October 8 – 14, 2006 conjunction with Earth Science Week. The Cave Board hosts a Virginia Cave Week webpage (see <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dnh/cavewk.htm>) with links to educational resources. Ms. Babs Melton reported that Crystal Caverns at Hupps Hill plans to have several activities in observance of Virginia Cave Week.

### **Joint Technical Committee**

DCR’s Stormwater Management Program is continuing to work on revisions to stormwater regulations through internal committees and an external Technical Advisory Committee. The Cave Board’s Technical Committee is following the process in several ways, including requesting updates from the Karst Program and attending external TAC meetings. The Technical Committee will draft a letter to DCR this fall about the proposed revisions.

The Technical Committee will ask the Cave Board for volunteers to organize a meeting in the Rye Cove area for all karst stakeholders, including the public, Scott County Board of Supervisors, and local planning officials. This general awareness meeting has several possible purposes:

1. Provide education for stakeholders about cave and karst issues
2. The Cave Board will gain an understanding of the stakeholders’ issues.
3. Discuss the comprehensive plan and how future versions could address karst.
4. Provide education about conservation easements.

### **Virginia Karst Program Update to Virginia Cave Board (May 1 – Sept. 16, 2006)**

Mr. Wil Orndorff reported on the recent work of the Virginia Karst Program:

#### **Technical Assistance:**

Negotiations continue on the Blue Spring (Frederick County) Water Withdrawal Permit. Minimum spring flow requirement increased from .181 to 1.2 million gallons per day.

Revision of stormwater regulations continues. Use of appropriate best management practices for stormwater management in karst is incorporated into regulations. DCR staff is still working out the details. Virginia Cave Board could be very useful in revision of the Stormwater Management Handbook, which is heavily referenced by the regulations.

Comments continue to be provided to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation on properties under consideration for conservation easements. Of specific interest is a several thousand acre property in Tazewell County that includes biologically significant caves, including known localities of the Virginia Big-eared Bat. Staff is following up with stakeholders to

pursue installation of best management practices on the property, emphasizing cattle exclusion from sinkholes and sinking streams.

Karst program staff is working to promote the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) WQ-11, Agricultural Sinkhole Protection, through demonstration projects in each of Virginia's major karst watersheds. Staff has worked with DCR Division of Soil and Water staff to ensure that caver volunteer time can count toward the landowner's portion of the project cost, which is rated as 25% of total project cost for this BMP.

Staff continues to work closely with the Virginia Speleological Survey (VSS) to review development projects for potential impacts to karst resources. Over the past 3.5 months, approximately 100 projects have been review for potential impacts to karst.

Staff has responded to numerous requests for technical assistance in response to sinkhole collapses.

Staff has been working closely with Division of Soil and Water Urban Programs field staff to address specific stormwater management issues in Virginia's karst region.

Staff submitted the final report entitled "Karst Study of the Cedarville Enterprise Zone", an official technical report of the Natural Heritage Program, in June to Warren County Board of Supervisors and to other stakeholders.

**Education and Outreach:**

Chesapeake Bay Academy – Mountain. Sixteen teachers attended the week long event. This is a partnership event sponsored by the Virginia Resource Use Education Council and funded by NOAA.

Project Underground workshops – 4 Project Underground workshops where held reaching 113 teachers. This makes 11 workshops so far in 2006. Several facilitators helped with these workshops. 3 additional Project Underground workshops are planned for 2006.

The VA State Bat handout was designed and printed. Staff is working with other DCR staff and DGIF staff to develop web page and brochure information.

Caver volunteer Mary Sue Socky worked with students attending a soil and cave program at the Science Museum in Roanoke.

An "Introduction to Environmental Education Day" in Lee County led to an Underground workshop to be held in Nov.

Staff attended the Alleghany Highlands Environmental Alliance meeting in Bath County.

Staff will attend the Virginia Environmental Education Conference – Sept. 19-20, with a presentation on Bats and Cave Critters, and the Virginia Association of Science Teachers meeting, Nov. 16-18, delivering a presentation on Bats and Cave Critters and manning the DCR education display featuring the VA State Bat. Staff will be attending the Cave Conservancy Conference in Lewisburg, West Va.

**Data Development:**

Josh Rubinstein and Bill Balfour continue working as part-time karst protection assistants. Conservation sites covering approximately 30 significant caves in Augusta, Highland, Tazewell, Wise and Rockbridge counties have been completed or are nearing completion.

Hydrological studies are ongoing in the North River Watershed (Rockingham and Augusta counties), Hightown Valley (Highland County), Powell Mountain (Wise County), Maiden Spring (Tazewell County), Jasper (Lee County), Divides-Claypool Hill US460 Corridor (Tazewell County), and the City of Radford.

**Natural Areas Protection:**

The project by the DCR Division of Natural Heritage to acquire a biologically significant cave in the Northern Shenandoah Valley for inclusion in the Virginia Natural Area Preserve System continues.

**Stewardship:**

A bat-friendly gate was installed in cooperation with the owner, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the VPI Grotto of the NSS, and the American Cave Conservation Association on Grigsby Cave in Scott County in June-July, 2006. This cave is home to an intermittent summer colony of several thousand Gray Bats (*Myotis grisescens*), and may have some use as a maternity colony.

Staff will be leading a trip to the Clover Hollow Natural Area Preserve (Stay High Cave) at the fall 2006 Meeting of the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society.

**Grand Caverns**

Ms. Judy Molnar asked for a status report on efforts to have Grand Caverns become a state park. Mr. Larry Smith reported that DCR is directed by the General Assembly to work to hold discussions with the Upper Valley Regional Parks Authority to facilitate the eventual transfer of Grand Caverns to the Commonwealth of Virginia for incorporation into the State Park System.

**New Business**

**Virginia Speleological Survey**

Ms. Futrell pointed out that the Virginia Speleological Survey (VSS) works with the Cave Board to maintain a list of significant caves in Virginia. This year, VSS has recognized three additional caves and one additional karst area as being significant.

**Recognition of Service to the Virginia Cave Board**

MOTION: Ms. Moss moved that the Virginia Cave Board express its appreciation to Mr. Robert Barns and Mr. Joe Davis for their service as members of the Virginia Cave Board.

SECOND: Dr. John Holsinger seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**Cave Board Show Cave Contacts**

Mr. Lera polled the Board to update the following list of Cave Board show cave contacts:

Crystal Caverns at Hupps Hill – Babs Melton  
Dixie Caverns – David Socky  
Endless Caverns – Claire Ward  
Gap Cave at Cumberland Gap National Historic Park – Thomas Lera  
Grand Caverns – Judy Molnar  
Luray Caverns – Babs Melton  
Natural Bridge Caverns – David Socky  
Natural Tunnel State Park – Andrea Futrell  
Shenandoah Caverns – Andrew Harrison  
Skyline Caverns – Barbara Moss

**State Endangered Species Nomination**

Dr. John Holsinger reported that the DCR Natural Heritage Program has recommended to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services that several species of cave beetle be added to the Virginia Endangered Species List. The choice of common names for two of the beetles were discussed and the consensus of the board was that more appropriate descriptive common names should be adopted for these species

MOTION: Dr. Holsinger moved that the Virginia Cave Board express its support for the listing of the cave beetle species as recommended by the Virginia department of Conservation Division of Natural Heritage for listing under the Virginia Endangered Plant and Insect Act of 1979. The Cave Board suggests that the common name be changed from Mud-dwelling cave beetle to Maddens cave beetle

and that the common name be changed from Thin-neck cave beetle to Hupps Hill cave beetle.

SECOND: Ms. Melton seconded

DISCUSSION: Mr. Tom Smith gave some background information about the listing process and suggested that a letter be written to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services expressing the Board's support for the listing of the subject cave beetle species.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

### **Announcements**

Mr. Tom Lera announced that several members of the Cave Board as well as some cavers who have close associations with the Board were recently recognized for their work in cave and karst at the 2006 National Speleological Society Convention at Bellingham, Washington. Andrea and Mike Futrell received the Lew Bicking Award for their considerable cave exploration and mapping work. Tom Lera was awarded the Peter M. Hauer award for outstanding spelean history research. Wil Orndorff of the Virginia Karst Program was named a Fellow of the NSS, as were Virginia cavers Gordon Birkhimer, Cheryl Kayes, and Lynn Richardson. Jim McConkey received the National Caves Association Award for the best paper on a show cave at the 2006 NSS Convention for his presentation on the recent exploration and mapping project at Grand Caverns. The Virginia Region of the NSS received a Certificate of Merit for its recent exploration and other efforts at Grand Caverns in Grottoes, Virginia.

Ms. Molnar reported that the Commonwealth of Virginia was recognized for establishing the Virginia Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus virginianus*) as the official state bat in the "Flaps and Flops" section of the "Bat World News", spring issue, volume 11, from Bat World Sanctuary at [www.batworld.org](http://www.batworld.org).

Ms. Carol Zokaites noted that the organizers of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program are seeking cave and karst related information to incorporate in the program.

Mr. Joey Fagan distributed compact disks containing background information on Virginia laws and regulations that have application to cave and karst, past Cave Board Minutes, and other resources for use by members of the Cave Board.

Mr. Lera announced the recent release of the book, Cave Conservation and Restoration by the National Speleological Society. Mr. Lera of the Virginia Cave Board, Mr. Fagan and Mr. Orndorff of the Virginia Karst Program authored chapters of the publication.

### **Appreciation to the Upper Valley Regional Parks Authority**

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Lera expressed appreciation to the Upper Valley Regional Parks Authority for hosting this meeting of the Virginia Cave Board.

**Set Next Meeting Date**

The time and location will be determined at a later date by the Board. The meeting will be held on January 20 or 27 in 2007, most likely at Grand Caverns or at Endless Caverns.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Ward moved the meeting be adjourned. Dr. Holsinger seconded. Mr. Lera adjourned the meeting at 2:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Thomas Lera  
Board Chairman

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Joseph H. Fagan  
Secretary